



The National Democratic Revolution

ANC YL POLITICAL EDUCATION MANUAL

Introductory Remarks

- From its inception, the ANC has been involved in struggle to end the system of white minority domination and to create a democratic and non-racial society.
- Through the years from its foundation in 1912 to the elections in 1994, the ANC and other formations of the movement for national liberation have pursued this strategic objective by whatever means necessary and possible.
- During the course of these years, the national liberation movement scored tactical victories and suffered temporary tactical defeats. It won and lost many battles, but never lost the war.
- The meaning and essence of the NDR has over the years been subjected to various interpretations and meanings.
- Here we discuss in detail the meaning, historical evolution and future of the National Democratic Revolution.

Does the NDR Mean?

- **“shortest route to socialism”**; (COSATU 9th Congress Resolution)
- **“dialectical resolution of the class, gender and national contradictions”**; (Morogoro)
- **“non-capitalist or socialist orientated transition in SA”**; (SACP’s GS What is the National Democratic Revolution)
- **“Management of capitalism and the contradictions that arise thereof”** (Joel Nethistendzhe and the Draft Strategy and Tactics of the ANC);
- **“liberation of Africans in particular and blacks in general”** (ANC Mafikeng Strategy & Tactics);
- **“Resolution of national grievance”**; (Joel Netshitendzhe)
- **“Programme to modernize the economy”** (ANC Policy discussion documents)

What is NATIONAL in NDR

- The NDR is a struggle for NATIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION—consolidation of National Sovereignty—changing of the dependent development path.
- The “national” in the NDR also refers to the task of NATION BUILDING—consolidation of a single, collective South Africanness—dispelling of narrow ethnic, tribal and racial nations. Racism—ideological weapon for imperialism.
- The third dimension of the “national” in the NDR is REVOLUTIONARY NATIONALISM.—recognition and acknowledgment of the national content of the class struggle.
- The fourth dimension of the “national” in the NDR is NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS.— patriotism and ownership of and responsibility to South Africa

What is DEMOCRACY in the NDR

- In broader terms, Democracy is the culture of broader and equitable participation in decision making process, i.e. rule (demos) by the people (cracy). In the context of management of nation-states, this includes:
 - Elections
 - Human Rights
 - Equality of Constitutional Rights
 - Civil Liberties
 - Freedom
 - Rule of law
- Democracy (equitable participation in decision making process) is both the goal of, and a critical means of waging the NDR.
- NB: There are various definitions and expatiations of democracy along ideological lines, e.g. bourgeois democracy, workers' democracy, liberal democracy, deliberative democracy

What is a Revolution?

- A change in social, political and economic relations;
- A change of the ruling class through “elections” or “violent insurrection”.
- Revolutions are a result of:
 - Failure of “governments” to meet social needs.
 - Economic collapse.
- Revolutions can be between or against classes.
- Society is always in constant revolution, with the ultimate goal being the seizure of political and state power.
- Was 1994 in SA a Revolution?
- Which great revolutions do we know of?

The origins of NDR?

- Marxist concept that emerged from the 2nd Congress of the Communist International
- The debate was how do you conceptualize the working class struggles in colonial and semi-colonial countries
- The Communist International recognised the connection of national oppression with class exploitation in most colonised and semi-colonised territories.
- And said that for total emancipation, the oppressed people in colonised territories should concurrently wage a battle against national oppression, gender suppression and class exploitation, without elevating the other over the other.

Origins of the NDR

- In South Africa, the NDR was introduced by the SACP in 1928 and later adopted by the ANC, which was guided by the resolution of the Communist International.
- ANC had initially interacted with the Comintern through the visit of ANC President JT Gumede and Secretary General E.J Khaile to the Soviet Union.
- Liberate Africans in particular and blacks in general—since they concurrently suffered national oppression and class exploitation, but create a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic, united and prosperous nation.
- Emphasis that National liberation should be linked with social and economic emancipation.
- Necessitated for an alliance between Progressive forces for National Liberation and Communist forces fighting against class exploitation.
- Freedom Charter demands fit in well to the objectives of the NDR.

What then is the NDR in SA context?

- Given what a Nation, Democracy and Revolution are:
 - What is the NDR?
- It is the struggle to overcome the legacy of racial or national oppression of the black majority and Africans in particular from political and economic bondage through creation of a racially united nation with no gender and economic exploitation.
- This should necessarily entail the attainment of all Freedom Charter objectives and building of sustainable livelihoods for all.

Basis of the NDR

- Oppression of and domination over the black majority by the few colonial white rulers.
- The objective material conditions of an interlinked national oppression, capitalist exploitation and gender oppression;
- Insight gained from observing aborted national revolutions and anti-colonial movements in other parts of the world.
- As a matured revolutionary movement, the SA National Liberation Movement did not present NDR as being class neutral.
- The class element in the SA National Liberation Movement was in sharp contrast to many anti-colonial movements in Africa and other colonised countries
- Under South Africa's colonial domination, '*The two elements – national oppression and capitalism – are inseparably intertwined and mutually reinforcing*'

Basis of the NDR (2007 S&T)

- 2007 ANC Strategy and Tactics says “Colonialism of a Special Type contained within itself contradictions that could not be resolved through reform. It had to be destroyed”.
- It further says that “Our definition of Colonialism of a Special Type identifies three interrelated antagonistic contradictions: class, race and patriarchal oppression”
- “The National Democratic Revolution is defined as such precisely because it seeks to abolish this combination of sources of social conflict. It has national and democratic tasks, and it should strive to realise:
 - a united state based on the will of all the people, without regard race, sex, belief, language, ethnicity or geographic location;
 - a dignified and improving quality of life among all the people by providing equal rights and opportunities to all citizens; and
 - the restoration of the birthright of all South Africans regarding access to land and other resources”

What are the aims of the NDR?

- Nationally liberate and economically emancipate Africans in particular and blacks in general.
- Simultaneously (at the same time) address the gender, national and class contradictions.
- Build a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic, united and prosperous South Africa .
- Attain the objectives of the Freedom Charter.
- For the SACP and COSATU, the attainment of NDR objectives “forms a basis for a socialist revolution—as it will create a united and independent nation with internal capacity to protect and care for its citizens, and would have discontinued private ownership of the commanding heights of SA’s economy”.

Liberation?

- **Morogoro S&T says ‘In our country - more than in any other part of the oppressed world - it is inconceivable for liberation to have meaning without a return of the wealth of the land to the people as a whole. It is therefore a fundamental feature of our strategy that victory must embrace more than formal political democracy’.**
- **Further says “To allow the existing economic forces to retain their interests intact is to feed the root of racial supremacy and does not represent even the shadow of liberation”.**

What are the motive forces of the NDR?

- Motive Forcers are Drivers of Change, they are the force behind the motion forward.
- Motive forces are:
 - That section is society that is most oppressed,
 - united through its oppression and exploitation,
 - resolute in defeating the oppressor and exploiter to objectively benefit,
- The main and leading motive force of the National Democratic Revolution are the working class.
- The black petit-bourgeoisie and the black middle-class, due to the nature of apartheid capitalism which excluded them from the economic main-stream, are the motive forces of the NDR.
- The unity of various stratum in society, under the leadership of the ANC, including students, black professionals, women, youth, unemployed, black business contributes into the struggled for meeting the objectives of the NDR.

Who is the primary enemy of the NDR?

- White monopoly capital
- Monopoly capital refers to huge capitalists who have total control over a sector of economic production.
- The interests of monopoly capital were safeguarded in the oppression and exploitation of the black majority and Africans in particular.
- Presently, the interests of monopoly capital are safeguarded in the impoverishment of majority of the people who should benefit from the success of the NDR.
- The manner in which monopoly capital has conducted itself has a bearing on the outcomes of the NDR.

Colonialism of a Special Type

- Colonialism refers to the situation where another country would have absolute political, economic and socio-cultural control of another country. The people on one country would then be forcibly subjected to the rules and regulations of another country. For example, the rules and laws of Mozambique and Angola would be decided upon and directed by Portugal, which had colonial administrators ruling over Mozambique and Angola. In Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Namibia the coloniser was Britain, and for Congo was the coloniser was France.
- **Colonialism of a Special Type (CST) refers to the fact that in South Africa, the colonisers had naturalised into South Africa, and had established an economic, socio-cultural and political domination of the African majority within the same territory. While they had strong links with Britain, the colonisers of South Africa had established an independent State to internally colonise the African majority.**

Colonialism of a Special Type

- No qualitative difference between the status of the Africans (and, in the main, the other non-white population groups) in the Union of South Africa and those elsewhere in Africa—or the people of any other colonial territory. ‘Colonial’ living standards, deprivation of political rights and constitutional liberties, and deliberate efforts to prevent their economic and cultural developments—all these are characteristics of colonialism.
- CST, which is also known as internal colonialism what characterised by three interrelated and interconnected contradictions: race, class and patriarchal oppression. There antagonisms found expression in national oppression based on race; class exploitation directed against black workers on the basis of race; and triple oppression of women based on their race, their class and their gender.

CST and the NDR

- It is also through the recognition of CST characterisation of South Africa, which made particularly the ANC to agree that the struggle for total emancipation should be through the NDR.
- The CST conceptualisation, Freedom Charter and NDR are the main theoretical components that underpin the alliance between the ANC, SACP and the Progressive Workers' movement.
- For the SACP and COSATU, the attainment of Freedom Charter/NDR objectives should lead to Socialism.
- In this context, the ANC is not an anti-Socialist movement, but a non-Socialist movement, which is not hostile to the struggle for Socialism.

What is socialism?

- Socialism is the transitional phase between Capitalism and Communism
- Under Socialism, political power and the State is under control of the working class.
- The working class in the process of transforming property relations in the economy to benefit all.
- Mediating the discussion between Peter Mokaba and Jeremy Cronin, Jordi Mortorell once said, “There is no doubt that even under socialism there might be some room for the private sector. But the main sections of the economy would be nationalised, under workers' control and democratic planning. In the case of South Africa this would involve the mines, the main industries (steel, auto, transport, building, etc), the banks and insurance companies. In fact the South African economy is highly monopolised and it would take only the nationalisation of a few monopoly groups for democratic planning to be effective”. (Jordi Mortorell; *The Policies of the South African Communist Party and its Alliance with the ANC government*, In Defence of Marxism, 17 May 2002)

What is Socialism?

- “Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat” Marx—Critique of the Gotha Programme
- The first step in this process is the seizure of political power by the working class majority of society under the leadership of the Working Class Vanguard, the Communist Party. Once in political power, the working class can then move to assert its control over the economy.

The economy under socialism

- Once the working class democratically runs the economy in the interests of all, instead of in the interests of a handful of capitalists, then very quickly we will be able to provide the basic necessities and then much more to everyone.
- We will be able to abolish unemployment, provide free, quality healthcare, education, housing, and more to everyone
- The productive forces will be radically developed to benefit as many people as possible, and their development will not be privately owned by capitalists.
- Production and distribution will be socialised.

The SACP's Conception of Socialism

- It is Marxist Leninist.
- It has four PILLARS:
 - Non Racism.
 - Non-Sexism.
 - Democracy.
 - Socialisation of the means of production.
- Socialism is therefore linked to the NDR.
- NDR is the road to Socialism, meaning that attainment of Freedom Charter objectives lays basis for the transition to Socialism.

SACP's Conception of Socialism

- SACP Constitution (Section 4.1) says under **GUIDING PRINCIPLES** that our aim is, “to end the system of capitalist exploitation in South Africa and to establish a socialist society based on the common ownership of, participation in, and control by the producers of the key means of production. Such a society will respect and protect all personal non-exploitative property.

The South African Economy under Socialism— SACP's view

- The Commanding Heights of the Economy should not be privately owned and the working class led State should be able to provide:
 - Free, Compulsory and Quality Education
 - Free Water and Sanitation
 - Free Quality Housing and Electricity
 - Free Health and Treatment of Diseases
 - Development that benefits everyone, not few people
 - Democracy, Human Rights, Peace and Stability
 - Creation of a State Bank to assist Co-operatives and SMMEs
 - Restitution of Land to the People as a Whole and Provision of Agricultural Support to Small-scale farmers.
- **THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM IS A STRUGGLE TO BETTER THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE PEOPLE AS A WHOLE!**

What Socialism is not:

- Socialism is not some huge bureaucracy that disregards rights and freedoms of individuals.
- Socialism does not mean State or government ownership.
- It is not a society, where private non-exploitative property (such as Houses, Cars, Clothes) will be commonly shared.
- Socialism is about ending the private ownership of the means of production (mines, huge farms, monopoly industries).
- Socialism *does not* do away with personal property. Socialism does away with private property- property owned by individuals and used to make a profit such as factories and banks. People will be able to have and cultivate personal property items like cars, TVs and ipods.
- If teaching critical thought is negative, so be it. “The Communists have not invented the intervention of society into education; they do but seek to alter the character of that intervention and to rescue education from the influence of the {bourgeois} ruling class”.

NDR and Socialism

- When conceptualised in 1920 by the Comintern, the NDR was set to be a basis for socialist revolutions in colonial and semi-colonial countries
- When the SACP and ANC adopted the NDR, they had in view a formulation of struggle towards socialism (*illustrate this later*)
- The ANC report of the Politico-Military Strategy Commission (Green Book) in 1979 indicated that the ANC accepted that there should be a link between NDR and socialism, but understood that whilst not anti-Socialism and not anti-Communism, the ANC is not fighting for these realities.

NDR as Basis of the ANC/SACP/COSATU Alliance

- SACP acknowledged that for a socialist revolution in South Africa, there is a necessity to address the national oppression that was intrinsically linked to class exploitation
- ANC acknowledged that although national and gender oppression was the dominant contradiction in society, class exploitation was the primary contradiction, which had to be wiped out with national oppression.
- Working class as leading the NDR and a dynamic link between National Liberation and Socialism.
- As later as 2001 SACP/ANC Bilateral, the ANC acknowledged that the working class is a dynamic link between National liberation and socialism .
- There have always been elements of socialism in the conceptualisation of the NDR, with an understanding that the SACP will lead the struggle for socialism.

Historical elements that shaped the NDR

- 1955—Freedom Charter committed ensure that the mineral wealth, and land belonged to the people as a whole
- Freedom Charter committed to a non-racial South Africa (SA belongs to all who live in it); Democratic culture (no government can claim legitimacy unless with the mandate of the people) and betterment of people's lives.
- Freedom Charter further committed to socialisation of ownership of banks and monopoly capital .
- The Freedom Charter understands that whilst private capital play a role, the key sectors of the economy should be owned and controlled by the people as a whole.

Understanding the Freedom Charter

- Proposed by Professor Z.K. Matthews, then President of CAPE ANC.
- First resolved in the ANC 42nd Congress of the ANC in December 1953, and the resolution said **“Conference instructs the National Executive Committee to make immediate preparations for the organisation of a "CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE OF S.A." whose task shall be to work out a "FREEDOM CHARTER" for all peoples and groups in the country”**.
- Re-affirmed in the ANC 43rd National Conference and said **“This Conference declares its unqualified support for the great Congress of the People sponsored by the National Organisations of this country. In this connection Conference enjoins all National Organisations, Church movements and associations to support, join in and participate in the great Campaign for the calling of the mighty Congress of the People having as its aim the drawing up of a Freedom Charter embodying the aspirations of the people of South Africa for a future free, united, multi-national, democratic community in which oppression and exploitation will be a thing of the past”**.
- **1955 ANC Congress Report says “The Freedom Charter is the sum total of our aspirations, but more: it is the road to the new life”**.

Understanding the Freedom Charter

- The Freedom Charter envisioned a Democratic, Free and Equal Society, where the key means of production will be owned by the people as whole.
- This included land, mineral wealth, monopoly capital and banks
- There was an assertion in the FC that ‘everyone shall have the right to trade”, yet this did not outlaw or contradict the socialised ownership of production means.

THE FREEDOM CHARTER

The People Shall Share in the Country's Wealth:

- The national wealth of our country, the heritage of South Africans, shall be restored to the people;
- The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the Banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole;
- All other industry and trade shall be controlled to assist the wellbeing of the people;
- All people shall have equal rights to trade where they choose, to manufacture and to enter all trades, crafts and professions.

Historical elements that shaped the NDR

- 1969: Morogoro ANC Strategy & Tactics and Political Report which committed the ANC to:
 - Socialisation of key industries and monopoly capital
 - Land belonging to all who live in it
 - An ANC government shall restore the wealth of our country, the heritage of all South Africans to the people as a whole.
- The Morogoro National Consultative Conference in 1969 happened because of a group of young activists who raised concerns with the ANC leadership about the strategic direction of the ANC in exile, mainly that the tactical and strategic lines were not clearly defined.
- At the end the S&T was adopted by the 1969 Conference and a Revolutionary Council appointed to constantly review and give guidance to forces of change.

Historical elements that shaped the NDR

- **THE GREEN BOOK:**
- **Report of the ANC Politico Military Strategy Commission in 1979 tasked with**
 - *elaboration of an overall strategy based on mass mobilisation.*
 - *creation of the broadest possible national front for liberation.*
 - *strengthening the underground machinery by drawing into it activists thrown up in mass struggle.*
 - *development of operations out of political activity, guided by the needs and level of political mobilisation and organisation.*

GREEN BOOK

- **1979—GREEN BOOK Says:**

“It should be emphasized that no member of the Commission had any doubts about the ultimate need to continue our revolution towards a socialist order; the issue was posed in relation to the tactical considerations of the present stage of our struggle”

Green Book further said: “The AIMS of our National Democratic Revolution will only be fully realised with the construction of a social order in which all the historic consequences of national oppression and its FOUNDATION, economic exploitation will be liquidated.

Historical elements that shaped the NDR

- 1979: President Thabo Mbeki's address in CANADA lobbying for support of the South African struggle (published in *Sechaba* as Historical Injustice) said:
“The charge of traitor might stick if we were to advance a programme of equality between black and white while there remained between these two communities the relations of exploiter and exploited”
- 1985 document for the Kabwe Congress titled the nature of the South African ruling class characterised the South African social formation as capitalist and committed the ANC to the FREEDOM CHARTER
- In 1990, Nelson Mandela first public address after release from Prison, said:
“nationalisation of the mines, banks and monopoly industries is ANC policy, and any change to this policy is inconceivable”.

NB:

- In the National Liberation Movement, the concepts of nationalisation and socialisation of ownership of the means of production have been used interchangeably.
- The Freedom Charter called for ownership by the people (socialised ownership of production means) as a whole and this is different from nationalisation.
- e.g. apartheid State was in ownership of key productive means, and these were never benefiting the working class and the poor.
- Strong Emphasis in the ANC's *Discussion Document on Economic Policy, Ready to Govern*, RDP and SACP's *Path to Power* on the nationalisation and growth through redistribution principle.
- This was also in ANC Commissioned Macroeconomic Research Group Report (MERG)
- This shift, although relatively progressive, was divergence from the FREEDOM CHARTER assertions.

The rupture? Does it exist?

- 1996 adoption of GEAR as a macro-economic policy framework, which introduced:
 - Privatisation of SoEs
 - Deregulation
 - Informalisation and casualisation of labour
 - Retrenchments
 - Outsourcing
- GEAR represents the height of a strategic shift from the FREEDOM CHARTER and the Growth through Redistribution commitment of the later 1980s.
- **The 2006 ANC NWC response to the SACP State Power discussion document says:**
“To search for socialism in the ANC is like searching for the proverbial pin in a haystack”
- **The ANC 2007 Draft S&T limits the NDR to managing capitalism and building the “modern economy”**
- **SACP’s consistency on the NDR route to socialism labeled by the ANC as “extraordinary arrogant”**

The rupture?

- Demobilisation of the National Liberation Movement.
- Centralisation of Power in the Presidency of government .
- Governmentalisation of the struggles for national liberation and social emancipation.
- Attempts to move the ANC away from social basis into an electoral party, in agreement with imperialist forces, particularly concerning on sacrificing workers' rights.

What is to be Done?

- The People Should Share in the Country's Wealth.
- Monopoly Capital, Banks, and Mineral Wealth should be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole
- The Doors of Learning and Culture should be opened to all.
- All other industry and trade should be controlled to assist the wellbeing of the people.
- The movement towards attainment of Freedom Charter objectives should be speeded up.

Current Debates and Economic Direction

- Should the ANC continue leading the NDR?
- Should the NDR intensify capitalist accumulation or lead to socialism?
- **WHAT IS TO BE DONE?** Answers should come from progressive forces, particularly youth.
- Are we moving towards the attainment of Freedom Charter objectives?
- What are contemporary challenges to attainment of NDR objectives and aims.
- Is monopoly capital still the enemy of the NDR?
- Should sections of the black middle class and bourgeoisie be counted as part of the motive forces.

Build and Consolidate Youth Power

The ANC Lives! The ANC Leads!

Amandla!